

Message Text

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73

ACTION SCS-03

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 SCA-01 DHA-02 L-03 H-02 SY-05

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R 182235Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6866

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, MX

SUBJECT: W/W: ARRESTS: RUMORS EMANATING FROM MEXICAN PROPOSAL
FOR "PRISONER EXCHANGE"

REF: MEXICO 7956 AND PREVIOUS

1. EVER SINCE SECRETARY KISSINGER'S VISIT TO MEXICO IN JUNE, PRISONS IN MEXICO HAVE BEEN AWASH WITH RUMORS OF FOREIGN PRISONERS GOING HOME SOON. EMBASSY EFFORTS TO INFORM AMERICAN PRISONERS OF REAL SITUATION (REFTEL) HAVE DONE LITTLE OR NOTHING TO DISPELL THEM. MOST PERSISTENT RUMOR IS THAT GOM HAS APPROACHED GOVERNMENTS OF OTHER COUNTRIES HAVING PRISONERS HERE AND OFFERED TO RETURN THEM, AND THAT SEVERAL, NOTABLY CANADA AND COLOMBIA, HAVE ACCEPTED OFFER. MANY AMERICAN PRISONERS APPARENTLY BELIEVE THAT SEPTEMBER 16 (MEXICAN INDEPENDENCE DAY) HAS ALREADY BEEN SET FOR DEPARTURE OF COLOMBIAN PRISONERS.

2. EMBASSY HAS DISCUSSED RUMOR WITH BRITISH, CANADIAN AND COLOMBIAN EMBASSIES, ALL OF WHICH DENY ALLEGED GOM APPROACH. COLOMBIANS, HOWEVER, WHO HAVE ABOUT 100 PRISONERS IN MEXICO, INTEND TO DISCUSS POSSIBILITY OF ARRANGEMENT SIMILAR TO PROPOSAL WHICH GOM MADE TO US. COLOMBIAN COUNSELOR FOR CONSULAR AFFAIRS EMPHASIZED THAT NOTHING HAS SO FAR BEEN DONE IN THAT DIRECTION. (FOR DEPARTMENT'S INFORMATION ONLY: HE STATED DURING DISCUSSION WITH CCS CHIEF THAT TWO COLOMBIANS

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HAD DIED LAST YEAR AS RESULT OF TORTURE BY MEXICAN AUTHORI-

TIES).

3. OTHER RUMORS INVOLVE POSSIBLE HUNGER STRIKE BY AMERICAN PRISONERS IF AND WHEN OTHER FOREIGN PRISONERS ARE RETURNED TO THEIR COUNTRIES OR TO COINCIDE WITH PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA'S DEPARTURE FROM OFFICE IN DECEMBER, IF HE DOES NOT GRANT THEM PARDON OR IF NOTHING DEFINITE HAS COME FROM "EXCHANGE" PROPOSAL BY THEN. ONE VERSION HAS IT THAT 1732 INC. IS ORGANIZING HUNGER STRIKE BY RELATIVES, FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS IN US TO TAKE PLACE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THAT OF PRISONERS HERE.
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